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Reaction from Pas and DAP leaders to statement

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - While Pas reminded the Government not to be hasty in allowing non-Bumiputeras to acquire stakes in Bumiputera companies, its fellow opposition party the DAP said Malaysians should be told the truth about the current economic situation.

Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor said the Government's proposal to allow non-Bumiputeras to acquire stakes in Bumiputera companies temporarily had far reaching implications which may be difficult to solve later.

"It will be wiser for the Government to review the decision now. It should not take the easy way out and open Bumiputera companies to others," he said in Alor Star.

Fadzil said he was also unsure what the Government actually meant when it said that the move was only temporary.

"This must be made clear," he said when asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that the Government's proposal to allow non-Bumiputeras to acquire stakes in Bumiputera companies was only a temporary measure and only allowed in certain cases.

Dr Mahathir said he was needed to assist companies facing problems.

On Tuesday, Economic Adviser to the Government Tun Daim Zainuddin said non-Bumiputeras might be allowed to buy Bumiputera stakes in companies.

Daim said the change in policy would only apply to non-Bumiputera investors not foreigners.

Yesterday, DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said the time had come for Malaysia to go beyond the old "Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera distinction." Today, in another statement, Lim said that the Government should instead tell Malaysians the truth about the economy, even if it was bad news.

Lim said the people have been given the impression that the economy would recover in six months, or even in three months.

"However, such upbeat forecasts and scenarios are not supported by regional news and developments, with Governments and economists in the region significantly revising downwards their earlier growth forecasts," he said.

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